

**STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE EDWARD J. MARKEY (D-MA)
REGARDING REPORTS OF MISCONDUCT AND HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES
BY AMERICAN FORCES IN IRAQ**

May 7, 2004

Washington, D.C. – In response to reports of serious human rights abuses by U.S. military personnel and U.S. contractor or military intelligence personnel at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and at other locations in Iraq and Afghanistan, Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) today issued the following statement:

“The photographs of Iraqi prisoners being subjected to degrading and humiliating treatment by their captors, and the reports of acts of sexual abuse, physical abuse, and other acts of maltreatment shock the conscience.

“This type of disgusting behavior is contrary to every universal norm of human dignity and respect. It violates every American’s sense of what we value and honor in human relations, it runs contrary to all internationally-recognized standards, and it discourages those Iraqis who have looked to the United States for leadership in restoring security and stability to their homeland. It is completely unacceptable for anyone to be treating captives in such a barbaric fashion.

“I have joined with Representative Chris Bell (D-TX) in calling for the Defense Department’s Inspector General to immediately initiate an independent investigation into this matter. I also believe we need Congressional hearings to examine how such abuses could have occurred, whether there was a breakdown in the military and civilian chain of command at the Pentagon and the intelligence community that resulted in these abuses not being more promptly detected, halted and reported to the Congress, and what is now being done to identify all those responsible for these despicable acts. We must aggressively investigate this matter, and swiftly bring those who directed or committed these reprehensible acts to justice.

”I also think it’s important to understand the role of private contractors in the prison abuses. Yesterday the New York Times reported that two private contractors implicated in the abuses in a classified Army report two months ago are still on the job. Private contractors in Iraq do not appear to be subject to any U.S. law – not U.S. military justice and not U.S. law. The tragic example of the abuses in Abu Ghraib is a reminder that private military contractors remain an unsolved problem that we have to fix.”

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